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MISSISSIPPI  
BAPTISTS

# Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

## Memorial to Missing campaign begins

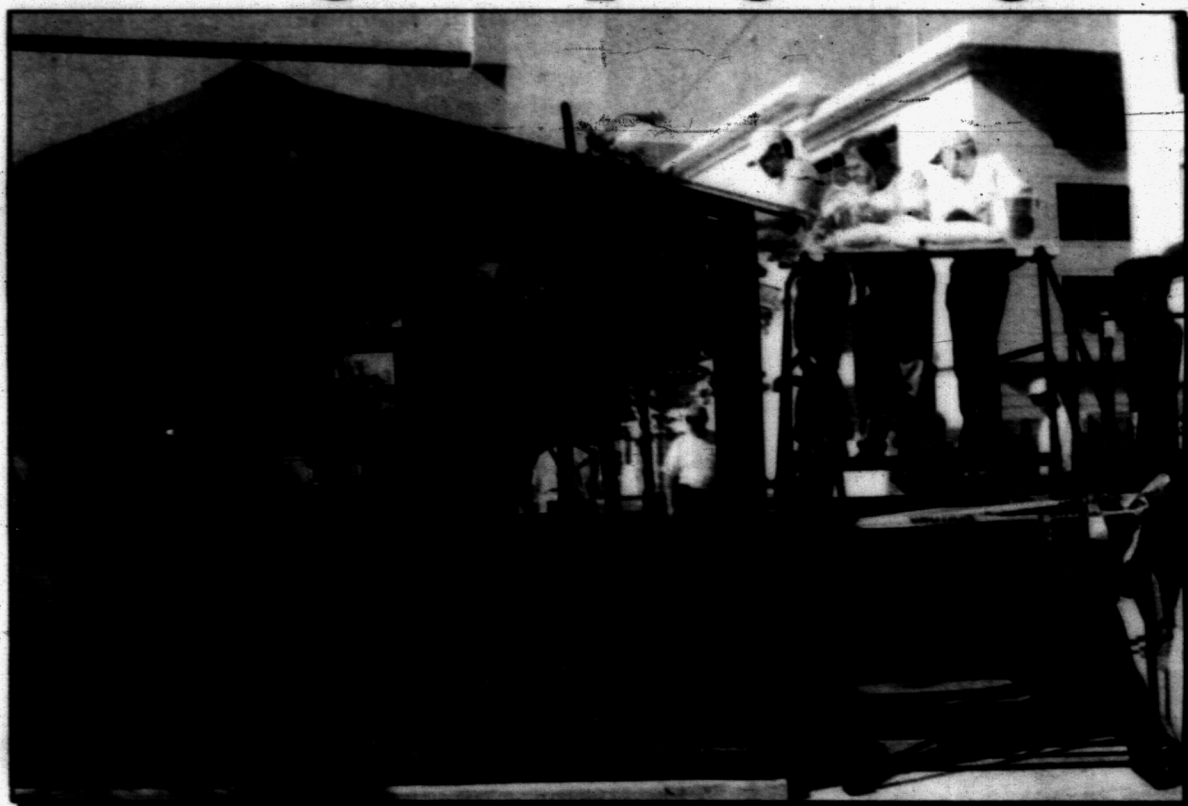
By Tony Martin  
Associate Editor

It is one thing to say that since the U.S. Supreme Court's 1973 decision in *Roe v. Wade* legalized abortion in all 50 states for the entire nine months of pregnancy, 50 million children have been aborted. Now, that number has moved from the abstract to the tangible with the Memorial to the Missing Celebration of Life Rally May 13 at the Baptist Building in downtown Jackson.

In a 13x7 feet container custom designed and built by Laws Construction Company of Flowood, approximately 20 million pennies now reside — each penny representing one child whose life was ended by abortion. The container, resting on the corner of Mississippi Street and North President Street, is mute testimony to the lives cut short by the abortionists' hands. People and churches from all over the state of Mississippi came to participate in the dedication of the memorial.

"Saturday was a great day," said Jim Futral, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB) executive director. "Neither the weather, nor the people, nor the participation, nor the spirit could have been better. Now that we're at about 20 million of the 50 million pennies, people are astounded to see what is happening in our nation."

"The pennies are important, but they take on true significance when you realize each one is a child. Now, we need even greater participation to reach the 50 million mark. The wonderful thing is that anybody, anywhere, any church, any group can participate if they have a penny. Some churches were unable to participate Saturday, but we need everyone to get involved."



**FOR THE BABIES** — Volunteers move heavy sacks of pennies into the Memorial to the Missing on May 13 in Jackson. The Memorial to the Missing is designed to hold 50 million pennies, each signifying one baby who has died since abortion was legalized in America in 1973. So far, about 20 million pennies have been placed in the Memorial. (Photo by Tony Martin)

Among the moving highlights of the morning were testimonies from Kim Slade, a member of Pineview Church, Clinton, and Janet Thomas, executive director of Pro-Life Mississippi and a member of Pinelake Church, Brandon.

"I had my abortion 13 years ago, but it is a day that is never far from my heart," said Slade.

Thomas said, "Today, it is only through the power of the Holy Spirit that I am able to share with you."

"I kept this shameful secret stuffed deep inside of me and pretended that it didn't happen. It was during my interview process with Pro-Life Mississippi that I finally knew I had to be truthful. It was then that I truly experienced God's grace."

Lisa Leavell, a member of First Church, Jackson, sang *Memories of the Missing*, an original song with lyrics by MBCB Cooperative Program Director Jerry Mixon and music by Eva Hart, pianist at First Church, Jackson.

Futral shared the keynote message. "Today we come here in our wonderful country to place a monument which will contain 50 million pennies."

"Every year, millions of people visit Washington, D.C., and see the Vietnam Memorial. On that black slab are 58,249 names of young men and women who gave their lives in Vietnam, but that doesn't begin to compare to the millions of children in America who have lost their lives silently, in sterile environments as they have died, day after day."

Many in the crowd had their own stories. One woman said, "I could have

been one of those pennies, but my mom decided to give me up for adoption."

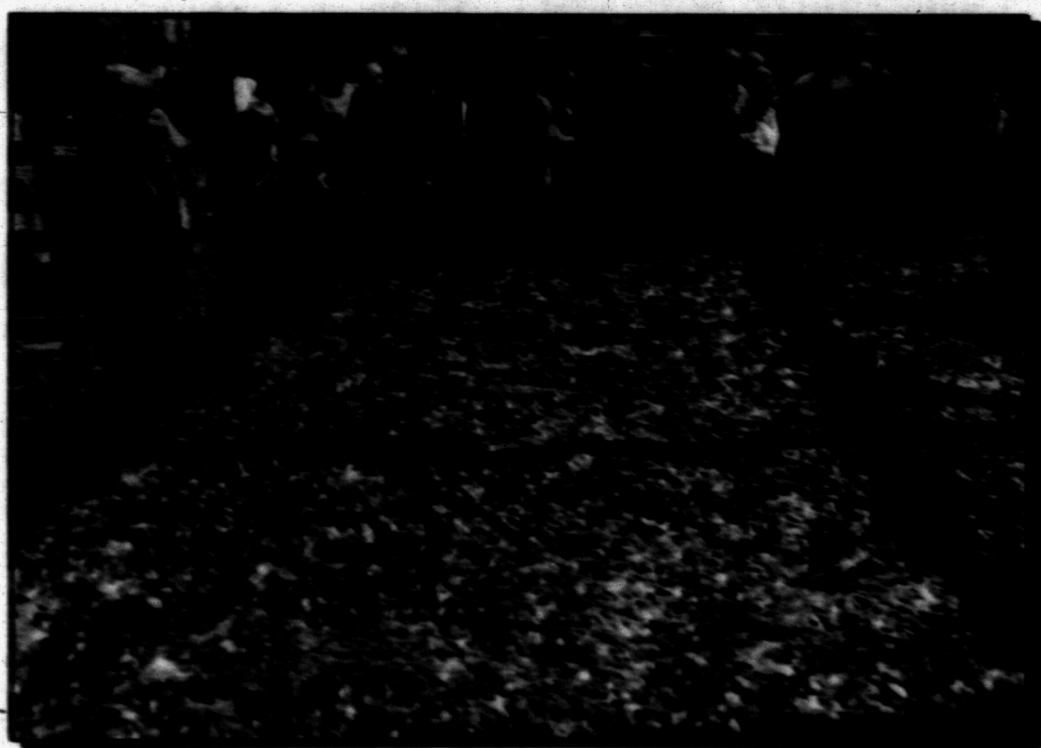
Tammy Anderson, a consultant for the Mississippi Woman's Missionary Union, said, "I was passing out water after the rally on Saturday and offered a bottle to a lady who was holding the most precious, brown-eyed little boy. He was about two years old. The mother took the bottle of water and opened it, and the little boy reached for the bottle and began to drink."

"The mother began to tell me that his mother had been willing to let her and her husband adopt the little boy. Otherwise, he would have been one of the pennies in the glass case."

Futral spoke on May 15 of the progress of memorializing the missing lost to abortion. "Many have asked how pennies for the memorial might be delivered to the Baptist Building. If someone can't bring the pennies to Jackson, then taking them to their associational office might be helpful — or, if need be, personnel from the Baptist Building will help transport the pennies back to the Memorial."

For more information on the year-long Memorial to the Missing campaign and how to get pennies to the Memorial, contact the Mississippi Baptist Christian Action Commission at (601) 292-3329, or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 329. E-mail: [rwood@mbcb.org](mailto:rwood@mbcb.org). Web site: [www.mbc.org](http://www.mbc.org).

"The focus is on the babies, as it should be, and not the pennies," Futral said. "I want to thank Mississippi Baptists for an already amazing job done, and thank them ahead of time for what they will do."

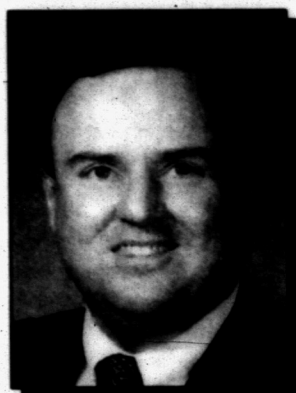


**SEA OF PENNIES** — Participants in the Celebration of Life Rally on May 13 at the Baptist Building in Jackson crowd the Memorial to the Missing to get a view of the 20 million pennies inside. The Memorial will eventually contain 50 million pennies, with each penny representing one American baby's life lost to abortion since it was legalized in 1973. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)





## EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK



**William H.  
Perkins Jr.**  
Editor

EDITOR  
William H. Perkins Jr.  
wperkins@mbcb.org

ASSOCIATE EDITOR  
Tony Martin  
tmartin@mbcb.org

LAYOUT/DESIGN  
Matt Broome  
mbroome@mbcb.org

ADVERTISING  
Dana Richardson  
drichardson@mbcb.org

CIRCULATION MANAGER  
Brenda Quattlebaum  
bquattlebaum@mbcb.org

EDITOR EMERITUS  
Don McGregor

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Fax: (601) 292-3330  
E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org

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# 20 million, and counting

**T**hey arrived at the Baptist Building by the millions — that is, about 20 million pennies brought to Jackson on or before May 13 to be included in the Celebration of Life Rally that day. Each penny collected was placed in the Memorial to the Missing, designed to hold 50 million pennies to memorialize the 50 million babies that have been slaughtered since 1973 in the modern American holocaust called legalized abortion.

It was in early 1973 that the U.S. Supreme Court's laughable decision in *Roe v. Wade* legalized abortion in all 50 states throughout the full nine months of pregnancy. At least, their decision would be laughable if it had not resulted in the deaths of 50 million people (a number that will be achieved later this year). It is laughable, however, in the context of the medical school professors who ridicule the "trimester" system of gestational development established by the justices and hold their ruling before aspiring young doctors as a cautionary tale of what can happen when politics trump established medical fact.

Yes, it is established medical fact that there is no formal trimester system of development used by doctors to gauge developmental milestones in unborn children. That's because, just like all of us, every day is a milestone in the development of an unborn child. When the justices on the court in 1973 crafted their *Roe* decision, they did so by pulling their legal and medical reasoning from thin air.

To understand the enormity of the 50 million people who are not with us today



**REMEMBERING THE LOST BABIES** — Janet Thomas (right), executive director of Pro-Life Mississippi and a member of Pinelake Church, Brandon, delivers her personal testimony on abortion during the May 13 Celebration of Life Rally at the Baptist Building in Jackson while Kay Cassibry, executive director of the Mississippi Woman's Missionary Union, drops a single penny into the Memorial to the Missing every 22 seconds to signify another life lost through legalized abortion. The Memorial to the Missing is designed to hold 50 million pennies in remembrance of the 50 million lives that have been lost since the U.S. Supreme Court's 1973 decision legalizing abortion in all 50 states throughout the nine months of pregnancy. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)

due to legalized abortion, try to think of it in terms of one million lives lost in each state of the union. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, that's more than the populations of seven separate states and the District of Columbia, and 35% of Mississippi's people.

The death toll is staggering, and grows larger every 22 seconds with each abortion in America.

It is fitting that Mississippi Baptists have chosen to remember the babies in this special way. As has been stated many times, this Memorial to the Missing is not about politics or judging those who have undergone or been involved with an abortion. It's about the babies, those precious little creations of God who were never given the chance to live.

The acrimonious political debate will go on and there are plenty of people around who condemn those who have had abortions, but let us be known as the people who cared about the babies who will never be.

Our Father does, and we should too.

*Editor's note: The Memorial to the Missing campaign for the 50 million missing American children will continue for a year, and pennies for the Memorial will be accepted during that time. Any amount of pennies is welcome, and will be used 100% for pro-life causes after the campaign is completed. For more information on the Memorial to the Missing, including how to contribute pennies or have the pennies delivered to the Memorial, contact the Mississippi Baptist Christian Action Commission at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3329 or toll-free outside Mississippi (800) 748-1651, ext. 329. E-mail: rwood@mbcb.org. Web site: www.mbcb.org.*

**O**ne of the questions I get asked regularly as I speak on *The Da Vinci Code* is, "Why do you think the book is so wildly successful?"

With the clock ticking down as the world awaits the movie's release on May 19, it seems appropriate to pose this query. At first, it seems counter-intuitive that a novel with as flawed a logic as *The Da Vinci Code* would resonate with the American (and worldwide) reading public. After all, this is a book about a non-existent code purported to provide clues to uncover suppressed evidence about a marriage (Jesus and Mary Magdalene) that never took place.

Why cover up evidence that does not exist? In fact, how does one cover up non-existing evidence, and why cover up evidence about a relationship that never existed in the first place? The answers to these questions are hard to fathom. Then why has *The Da Vinci Code* been so successful?

The answer lies, at least in part, with the American penchant for conspiracy theories. As author Dan Brown himself writes, "Everybody loves a conspiracy theory." In a perceptive recent essay subtitled, *Postmodern Conspiracy Culture and Feminist Myths of Christian Origins*, David Liefeld makes a compelling case that

## GUEST OPINION:



*The Da Vinci Code:  
perpetuating myth*  
By Andreas Köstenberger  
Southeastern Seminary  
Wake Forest, N.C.

American culture is virtually obsessed with conspiracy theories, no matter how implausible.

This, in turn, is part of the new, subjective, postmodern view of history, according to which history is nothing but one person's version of reality. Truth, for postmodernism, is provisional and constantly evolving, subject to revision as new facts surface that need to be incorporated. In fact, there is no absolute truth, only truth "for you" and truth "for me."

The other major reason why *"The Da Vinci Code"* has been such a success has, I believe, been suggestively presented by the British New Testament scholar and Anglican Bishop of Durham, Tom Wright. Wright contends that the thesis underlying *The Da Vinci Code* is part of the mainstream liberal

American "myth of Christian origins" that is found at elite educational institutions such as Harvard, moderate churches, and leading scholarly societies such as the American Academy of Religion and the Society of Biblical Literature.

In this understanding of Jesus, you give up — as historically unwarranted, theologically unjustified, and spiritually and socially damaging — the traditional understanding of Christ and Christian origins and instead get in touch with a different form of spirituality based on religious feeling. Discover whatever faith you find that you can believe in.

Rather than destroy Christianity, liberal theologians actually believe this will revive the truth for which Jesus lived and for which He died. This

spiritual quest, according to liberalism, will also involve reconnecting with the "sacred feminine" that the church suppressed in its early goings.

The *Da Vinci Code* will come and go, but this liberal "myth of Christian origins" will persist. It will persist because it is part of this esoteric blend of New Age spirituality, neo-Gnosticism, feminist scholarship, an anti-supernaturalist, critical, post-Enlightenment stance toward Christianity, and a postmodern, subjectivist approach to history and truth. It is this more abiding and pervasive phenomenon that should concern all serious, Bible-believing Christians.

Yet we will have failed if all we do is decry the inaccuracies of the book and present evidence that much of its reasoning is fallacious. The call of the hour is to present a positive and constructive case for the truth of Christianity so that people will turn from skepticism and unbelief to faith in Jesus Christ as the risen Savior and Lord.

Köstenberger is the founder of *Biblical Foundations* ([www.biblicalfoundations.org](http://www.biblicalfoundations.org)) and professor of New Testament at Southeastern Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C. His booklet on *The Da Vinci Code* can be ordered by calling the LifeWay campus bookstore at (919) 556-3481.



# Movie's release stirs evangelical criticism

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — The May 19 theatrical release of the movie *The Da Vinci Code* has sounded a battle cry, and evangelicals have responded by taking up their pens to combat the film's challenges to some of the most central doctrines of the Christian faith.

The *Da Vinci Code*, a movie from Sony Pictures, is based on the bestselling novel by Dan Brown and attacks such key doctrines as the deity of Christ, the reliability of the Gospels, and the bodily resurrection of Jesus. The movie also claims that Jesus was married to Mary Magdalene and had a child whose descendants are still alive.

Erwin Lutzer, senior pastor of The Moody Church in Chicago; Darrell Bock, research professor of New Testament studies at Dallas Seminary in Dallas, Texas; and R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky., are among the many evangelicals who have refuted the movie's claims.

"[T]his is not merely any piece of fiction. The scope of what it claims as fact, the impression it leaves making those claims under the 'cover' of fiction, and the fact that it addresses a significant subject for our culture's own self understanding make it important that its claims be assessed and/or appreciated," Bock writes in his book, *Breaking the Da Vinci Code*.

He continues, "[T]he issues of faith and relationship to God are too important to be left to the confusing category of 'historical' fiction where the claim is that despite being a novel the history is fact."

The movie advocates a false picture of Christianity, but believers can refute the errors by noting the biblical picture of Jesus and the true history of the faith, according to Lutzer, Bock, and Mohler. Some of the major heresies of *The Da Vinci Code*:

- **Error: The Council of Nicea invented the deity of Christ in A.D. 325.**

The *Da Vinci Code* argues that for the first 300 years after Christ, Jesus' followers viewed Him as a mere human. Then the Council of Nicea invented the deity of Christ for political purposes.

Mohler says the Council of Nicea did not invent the deity of Christ but proclaimed what the Bible taught and what the church had believed for 300 years. "The Council of Nicea did not 'invent' the divinity of Jesus," Mohler writes in an Internet commentary. "This was already the declaration of the Church, claimed by Jesus himself and proclaimed by the apostles."

The Roman Emperor Constantine called the Council of Nicea so that the bishops of his empire could settle disputes about Christ's nature. The disputes centered on a man named Arius who gained a wide following by teaching that Jesus

was a created being and not fully God. Orthodox Christians opposed Arius.

After discussion, the bishops at Nicea issued a creed affirming Scripture and declaring Jesus to be of the same nature as the Father and Arius a heretic. Only two bishops out of more than 300 present did not sign the creed.

gospels, Bock says. These writings advocated an unbiblical understanding of Jesus' life and ministry that the church rejected as heresy beginning during the time of the apostles.

According to Bock, the Gnostic gospels taught that some Christians had secret knowledge not available to all; that there is one spiritual, tran-

Bock and Lutzer point out that the Scripture and other historical documents give no reason to believe Jesus was married.

Scripture says that Mary was a disciple of Jesus out of whom Jesus cast a demon, that she was present at the cross and that she was a witness to the resurrection, according to Bock. The early church fathers also refer to Mary as "a faithful disciple, a follower of Jesus who witnessed Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection," Bock says, noting that Scripture never indicates that Jesus and Mary were married.

Two Gnostic gospels mention Mary's relationship with Jesus, Lutzer writes. "The gospel of Philip," written in the fourth century, says Jesus "loved" Mary "more than his students" and kissed her, but the poor quality of the manuscript prevents scholars from reading where Jesus supposedly kissed Mary.

Lutzer observes that the text might have said "the hand" or "the cheek" and is not an accurate account anyway.

The Gnostic "gospel of Mary" says Mary had a special relationship with Jesus and a rivalry with Peter. Lutzer notes, "Even if these accounts from the Gnostic Gospels were accurate, it is a stretch to say that Mary had a romantic relationship with Jesus, much less that she was married to him."

Bock notes additional evidences that Jesus was single. If Jesus was married, Paul likely would have referred to Jesus in 1 Corinthians 9 in defense of a minister's right to marry, he writes. Jesus also showed no special concern for Mary while He hung on the cross — an act that we would expect from a husband.

- **Error: There is no agreed-upon and authoritative version of the Bible.**

"The Bible did not fall magically from the clouds," says Teabing in *The Da Vinci Code*. "Man created it as a historical record of tumultuous times, and it has evolved through countless translations, additions, and revisions. History has never had a definitive version of the book."

Lutzer explains that there were books in addition to the Gnostic gospels written around the time of the New Testament books that were excluded from the canon, but the teaching of these books was sometimes vastly different from the New Testament Gospels. For example, one book claims that when Jesus was a child, he killed another child by pushing him off a roof and when accused, responded by raising the boy from the dead.

Resources that respond to the *The Da Vinci Code*'s allegations are available at LifeWay Christian Stores and online at [www.LifeWayStores.com](http://www.LifeWayStores.com).

Resources are also available at the North American Mission Board's web site: [www.namb.net](http://www.namb.net).



In response to the question of whether Nicea invented the deity of Christ, Lutzer writes, "There is not a single shred of historical evidence for such a notion. Not only was Christ's deity the consensus of the delegates, but as can easily be shown, this doctrine was held by the church centuries before the council met."

- **Error: Other gospels were banned from the Bible by people who wanted to make the church a patriarchal community.**

In what Bock calls perhaps "the most misleading statement of 'fact' in the entire novel," Brown claims there were more than 80 gospels considered for the New Testament but that only four were chosen. The "banned" books were suppressed because they showed the truth about Jesus and allowed women to take leadership in the church, according to *The Da Vinci Code*.

Although there were not 80 of them, *The Da Vinci Code* refers to what are called the Gnostic

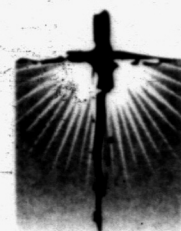
scendent God and one physical, wicked Demiurge who created the physical world; and that Jesus did not actually suffer on the cross. The Gnostic gospels also allow women to experience secret revelation and be leaders in the church, Bock says.

The church never even considered including the Gnostic gospels in the Bible, Lutzer said. "To put it mildly, there is no reason to accept the Gnostic gospels as historically worthy; their value lies in telling us what the Gnostics believed, even though the writings shed no new light on Jesus, Mary Magdalene, or early Christianity," Lutzer writes.

The 27 books of the New Testament were affirmed by Christians as Scripture based primarily on their ties to an apostle and their impact on the church and their internal qualities.

- **Error: Jesus was married to Mary Magdalene.**

In his novel, Brown claims that "the marriage of Jesus and Mary Magdalene is part of the historical record," but



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THE SECOND  
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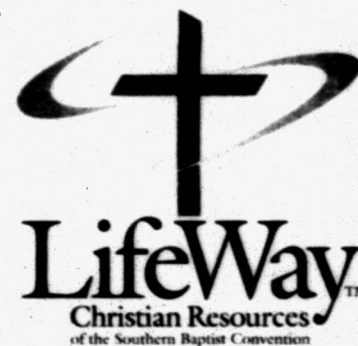
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## LESSONS RELEARNED

The other day I was talking to a friend who was taking up a sport at which he used to be pretty good and played regularly. Now after years of neglect he was going to try to play it again and reestablish his skills. The fact is that most of the things related to the sport he knew in his head, but he was faced with trying to get his muscles to understand what his brain already knew. That plus the fact that time may have changed his level of skill in the sport meant that he was in for an uphill battle. It was an experience of lessons relearned. I thought about him and what he was trying to do in sports when I was privileged to be with the fine folks at Ebenezer Church down in Mississippi Association the other day. I was indeed blessed and honored to be one of the speakers on the weekend of their 200th anniversary. It was a blessing to my heart and a spiritual mountain peak.

In the Mississippi Baptist Convention, there are seven Ebenezer churches, but only one can claim to be the first Ebenezer Church in Mississippi and that is where I was. The church was organized by the first Baptist preacher ever to come to Mississippi, Richard Curtis, Jr. He, along with a group of stalwart souls in what was then the Mississippi Territory, formed a Baptist church that keeps on serving, worshipping, and counting for the Lord to this day. It is hard to imagine what they might have been facing and what they needed in the way of spiritual resources to face life. Thomas Jefferson was president of the U.S. and Mississippi was 11 years from becoming a state — and there they were preaching the Gospel and winning souls. It

was a thought-provoking time for me when I went down to be with them for their Bicentennial. Through the evening and into the night it was for me a time of lessons relearned.

Let me share with you some of the things that crossed my heart as we spent the time together at that celebration. One of the thoughts that struck me in several different ways through the evening was that *the essential element of every generation is a living faith relationship with God*. The folks then may not have been struggling with the same issues that the folks are now. They knew nothing of computer chips, cell phones, airplanes, and motorized vehicles, but they did know something about carving a life out of a wilderness. They did know something about facing disease, discomfort, disappointments, and death. The outward configuration of life looked a little bit different then, but the real issues of the human heart remain the same. Without a concrete, living relationship with the Lord it is impossible to live with life's issues then or now. It occurred to me that an awful lot has changed and at the same time very little has changed. The Gospel of Jesus Christ transcends the ages and is still Good News today as it was Good News then.

The second lesson that struck my heart is that *it has required many wonderful, dedicated folks*

*to keep the church alive, vibrant, serving, and loving for 200 years.* Can you imagine what kinds of issues and obstacles have come along over those two centuries that could have prevented them from continuing to serve, love, and honor the Lord? Just think about it! Virtually every event past the Revolutionary War has touched and affected that congregation and they have pressed on. All sorts of decisions and dilemmas, both internal and external, have no doubt come their way yet they have continued to serve. Everything from economic depression to storms, and new leadership has come their way and they have kept their eyes on the Lord.

Many of us who know how important it is to stay faithful may still need to relearn the lessons of folks who have continued doing it for 200 years. That leads me to comment on a third lesson of great value to be relearned and remembered and that is *the church is important*. It is not unusual to hear voices in our world today — both from out of the church and from within the church — either impugning or attacking the value and the significance of the church of Jesus Christ. I can assure you that in time when those voices are no longer heard, the church will still be alive and viable. There are many good ministries and parachurch organizations that do

marvelous things and provide great impact on the world for our Lord, but what is so interesting to me is that virtually every one of them finds their strength, resources, and their personnel in the church. Even when they want to operate independent of the church, they want to find their inroads for help and sustenance from the church. The church is important not because I say it is important but because God Himself declared that it was and is of great significance.

One final lesson that continued to drift over my heart as I visited with the folks at Ebenezer was that *we have a responsibility to share a genuine and living faith with the next generation*. There were probably less than a dozen Baptist churches over the entire area called Mississippi when Richard Curtis, Jr., and that handful of charter members got together to form Ebenezer Church. Little did they know that what they were doing and the continuation of what they were doing would spread, bless, and enlarge so that the Mississippi Baptist Convention of churches would touch the entire world for Christ. When they started there was no association of churches, no convention, and no Southern Baptist Convention. They were just doing what God had called them to do in the context of the culture of that day, and so are we. We must share the Good News of Jesus with everyone all the time so that if Jesus tarries His coming for 200 more years there will be celebrations of new churches that have started, continued, and honored Jesus into the next centuries. God help us to relearn and never forget these valuable lessons.

The author may be contacted at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. E-mail: jfutral@mbcb.org.



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Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.



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**PINEVIEW BAPTIST CHURCH IS SEEKING A PART-TIME YOUTH MINISTER** to complete our ministry team. For consideration, send resume to Pineview Baptist Church, 1288 Clinton-Raymond Rd., Clinton MS, 39056; fax (601) 924-8378; email pineviewbc@aol.net; Attn: Search Committee. Deadline: May 31.

**NEW PROSPECT BAPTIST CHURCH** is seeking Part Time Music Director. Send resumes to 823 Hwy. 334, Oxford, MS. 38655.

**SILVER SPRINGS BAPTIST CHURCH** is seeking a Minister of Music. It is a part-time, paid position with some benefits. Please send resume to: Chairman of Search Committee, 1009 Berry Lane,

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**THE TRI-COUNTY BAPTIST MISSIONS PROGRAM**, (Lawrence, Marion, and Walthall Baptist Associations) is receiving resumes for an Associate Associational Missions Director. Please send resumes to Archie Herrin, P O Box 350, Columbia MS 39429. We will receive resumes until June 8, 2006.

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**MINISTER TO CHILDREN, FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, CROSSETT, ARK.** Resumes to: Children's Search Committee, First Baptist Church, 701 Main Street, Crossett, AR 71635 or fwhite@fbcrossett.com.

**CHURCH IS SEEKING PERSON TO FILL THE FULL-TIME POSITION OF MINISTER OF CHILDHOOD EDUCATION.** Minimum of two years experience in full-time Children's Ministry and Bachelor's Degree required. Send resume to: search committee, First Baptist Church, 701 South Main Street, Jonesboro, AR 72401.

**SALE: BALDWIN 6'-3" GRAND PIANO.** Excellent condition. \$17,240 obo., call (704) 226-0740.

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**HOPPER GLASS STUDIO, CUSTOM** church windows, reworking and repair, Columbus/Jackson, (877) 477-1899.

**CHURCH FEW UPHOLSTERY**, free estimates. Davis Upholstery, Quitman, Miss., phone (601) 776-6617.

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What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the

# HOUSE TOPS.

Matthew 10:27 NAS

May 18, 2006

HouseTops is a Baptist Record supplement produced by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Communication Services.

## Summer Mission Camps for Boys and Girls 2 • 0 • 0 • 6

### Central Hills Baptist Retreat Celebrating Over 25 Years of Ministry

#### SUMMER MISSION CAMPS (grades 3-12)

\$135 per person

10 a.m. Monday - noon Friday

- June 26-30 • July 17-21
- July 10-14 • July 24-28

#### LAD/DAD WEEKEND CAMPS (grades 5K-3 and adult)

\$42.50 per person (\$85 for both)

June 23-24 • July 14-15

3 p.m. Friday - 3 p.m. Saturday

#### CHILDREN'S MISSION CAMPS (COED)

(for boys and girls grades 1-6/one adult chaperone per every seven children)

\$90 per person

June 12-14 - 10 a.m. Monday - noon Wednesday

June 15-17 - 10 a.m. Thursday - noon Saturday

June 19-21 - 10 a.m. Monday - noon Wednesday

#### CHILDREN'S BIBLE DRILL CAMP FOR BOYS AND GIRLS (grades 3-6/one adult chaperone per every seven children)

\$90 per person

July 6-8

1:30 p.m. Thursday - noon Saturday

#### FOOTBALL CAMP

July 31-August 4

#### Attention All Coaches, Youth Ministers and College Ministries!

The first two weeks in August will be open for retreats, sports camps, and conferences.

For registration forms, please contact  
Central Hills Baptist Retreat, 662-289-9730,  
or go online to [www.mbcab.org](http://www.mbcab.org).

## August Camps 2006

### August 3-5 Camp Garaywa

#### Sessions:

- Family Ministry • Discipleship
- Youth Ministry • Sunday School
- Small Churches • Deacon Training
- Women's Ministry
- Preschool/Children's Ministry
- Bible Drills • Bible Buddies
- Speaker's Tournament

**Speaker**  
Argile Smith  
Vice President for  
Advancement  
William Carey College

Registration: 2 p.m. Thursday - Adjourn: after lunch, Saturday

#### FOR PROGRAM INFORMATION:

Contact the Discipleship & Family Ministry Office 601-292-3284 or 1-800-748-1651.

#### RESERVATIONS

can be made by phone with Visa/MasterCard at 601-292-3304.

Discipleship activities will be provided for preschool, children and youth.

## Church Compliance and Financial Issues Regional Conferences, 2006

with Glen Britt, retired IRS Auditor, CPA  
6 - 8:30 p.m., Supper Included  
Cost \$5, Reservations Please

#### • July 11, 2006

First Baptist Church, Oxford

#### • July 24, 2006

First Baptist Church, Winona

#### • September 18, 2006

New Site Baptist Church, Brookhaven

#### • September 19, 2006

38th Avenue Baptist Church, Hattiesburg

For Reservations: Call Financial Services Representative, MBCB  
(Formerly Annuity Board Rep) 1-800-748-1651 or 601-292-3227

Robin D. Nichols or Carol Taylor, Ministry Assistant



# OLDER CHILDREN'S BIBLE DRILL CAMP '06

For Church Groups of Boys and Girls Grades 3 - 6 (completed)

July 6 - 8  
Central Hills Baptist Retreat

Any Mississippi Baptist church can bring their children and they will profit from camp whether they have ever done Bible Drill or not.

## CAMP ACTIVITIES INCLUDE:

- Bible Study • Scripture Memorization • Rifle Range
- Bible Drill Skills • Worship (safety & marksmanship)
  - Time with Missionaries • Flag Ceremonies
  - Horseback Riding • Swimming • Canoeing

\$45 Deposit with Registration, Total Cost \$90

For registration information, please contact  
Central Hills Baptist Retreat.



# HeartSong 2006

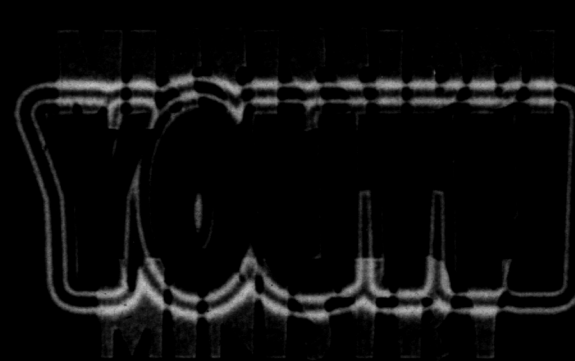
The music and worship arts camp for 7-12 grades

June 26-30, 2006

East Central Community College, Decatur, Miss.

- |                  |             |                |
|------------------|-------------|----------------|
| • Praise Band    | • Handbells | • Keyboard     |
| • Art            | • Playing   | • Guitar       |
| • Choral Singing | Instruments | • Part-singing |
| • Signing        | • Voice     | • Interpretive |
| • Drama          |             | Movement       |

For more info, contact the Church  
Music Department at 601-292-3266  
or 1-800-748-1651



# SuperSummer

July 6-8, 2006  
Camp Garaywa, Clinton

LEADERS  
Jerry Songer  
Lisa Leavell

## RESERVATION AND REGISTRATION

Participation is limited to the first thirty (30) couples who register for this retreat. Patterson Place has 30 rooms with two queen-sized beds in each.

Registration must be made with the MBCB Conference Office. (Phone: 601-292-3304)

## COST

For 2 nights lodging and 6 meals:  
Adults: \$112 per person; Preschool through 6th grade: \$56 per person; age 2 and under, no cost.

There is no conference fee.

For more information, contact the Pastor/  
Leadership Development Department at  
601-292-3305 or 1-800-748-1651, ext. 305.

## All-State Youth Choir & Orchestra 2006 Mississippi Concert Tour

- |         |                    |                             |
|---------|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| June 10 | 6:00 p.m.          | FBC, Ripley                 |
| June 11 | 11:00 a.m.         | North Oxford BC, Oxford     |
| June 11 | 6:30 p.m.          | Slayden BC, Lamar           |
| June 12 | 6:30 p.m.          | FBC, Philadelphia           |
| June 13 | 6:30 p.m.          | Rocky Creek BC, Lucedale    |
| June 14 | 6:30 p.m.          | Grace Memorial BC, Gulfport |
| June 15 | Coast Ministry Day |                             |
| June 16 | 6:30 p.m.          | FBC, Florence               |

For more info, contact the Church  
Music Department at 601-292-3266  
or 1-800-748-1651





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1. An **ESTABLISHED PROGRAM** with 35 years of proven results.
2. **CONSULTANTS** are trained ministers with years of experience.
3. **METHODS** based on a knowledge of Mississippi pastors, churches, and traditions.
4. Heavily dependent on home **PRAYER** visits to keep the **SPIRITUAL FOCUS ON GOD** and not raising funds.
5. Consultants are paid an **ESTABLISHED PRESET FEE** by our department.
6. **LOW CHURCH FEE** because the cost is supplemented by your gifts through the Cooperative Program.
7. We will maintain a convention/church **PARTNERSHIP AS LONG AS YOUR CHURCH EXISTS**, not just the three year campaign commitment.
8. Congregation **GIVING LEVEL RAISED** as families are discovered who have not been giving before and continue the practice of giving.
9. **INVOLVING** a large number of church members gives them a sense of **OWNERSHIP** in the event.
10. **BUILT AROUND EQUAL SACRIFICE AND NOT EQUAL GIFTS**, with each asked to make a sacrificial gift under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. Each gift will be celebrated.

For more info contact the Stewardship Department:  
601-292-3347 or 1-800-748-1651.



## 2006 Summer Youth Camps

**June 5-28**  
**Hinds Community College**  
**Raymond, Miss.**

- Affordable • High Quality Camp for your Youth Group • Program fees, meals, t-shirt and accommodations total just **\$165** per camper • Reservations are taken on a first come, first served basis.

Information regarding individual programs/schedules may be obtained by phoning Youth Ministry at 601-292-3286.

## Camp Pastors & Worship Leaders

**June 5-9**

Gary Permenter, Kevin Williams

**June 12-16**

Jon Daniels, Will Reedy

**June 16-20**

Clay Stegall, Will Reedy

**June 20-24**

Ken Hester, Tom Edwards

**June 24-28**

Kevin Cooper, Tom Edwards

## 2006 FAMILY ENRICHMENT WEEK

**July 2-5**  
**Central Hills Baptist Retreat**  
**Kosciusko**

## CONFERENCES

- Children, TeamKID
- Youth, Mini-Centrifuge
- Single Parent • Couples
- Reclaiming the Real Jesus

## SPECIAL EVENTS RODEO

- Rifle (grades 1-5) • Shaving Cream Battle
- Archery (grade 6 - adult)
- Nature Trails/Horseback Riding
- Arrowhead Hunts • Crafts • Games

## BARBEQUE COOKOUT

(Chicken, Ribs, Hamburgers, Hotdogs)

## CARNIVAL

- Super Slide • Big Maze
- Horse-back Riding
- Canoeing • Crafts (t-shirt/caps/jewelry)
- Space Jump • Clowns • Games

RESERVATIONS may be made by phone with a Visa/MasterCard, 601-292-3304.

PROGRAM INFORMATION: Contact the Discipleship & Family Ministry Office, 601-292-3284 or 1-800-748-1651.

**Explore what it means to understand, embrace, and live God's call.**

**Sheraton, Greensboro Hotel, Four Seasons**  
**3121 High Point Road at 1-40**  
**Greensboro, North Carolina**

**2006**

Greensboro, North Carolina



Our own Mississippi wMu president, **DONNA SWARTS**, is one of the speakers!

Contact the Mississippi wMu for more info: Contact Kathy Burns by E-mail KBurns@mbcb.org, or phone 1-800-748-1651 or 601-292-3324.



## Pray this day for...

May 19- June 1, 2006

Prayer Ministry Office • P.O. Box 530 • Jackson, MS 39205-0530 • Phone 601-292-3304 • Mississippi PrayerLine 1-800-787-7729 (PRAY)

*"Goals for tomorrow that don't prioritize present activities are nothing more than wishful thinking. We need to ask God each day if we are still on target and give Him the right to order mid-course changes in direction."*

*Mrs. Lois Langley, Retired Missionary*

Training church leaders is a high priority among the Guaymi of Southern Costa Rica and Panama. Two leadership training conferences will be held in June and July for them. Pray for missionaries Bill and Linda Egbert as they prepare materials and for the Guaymi teachers leading in the conference.

For: (1) II Senior Adult Conference, FBC, Natchez; 22nd - 24th (D&FM); (2) Basketball Team Camp for Girls, Central Hills; 22nd - 24th (MM); (3) James Reamer, church planter for the fast growing area of northern Las Vegas, asks for prayer that God would send workers to assist in outreach evangelism, weekly services, and for openness to the gospel.

Groups minister to street people and drug addicts in the early morning hours in mega cities in various areas of Brazil. They take meals and the Gospel into some dangerous areas where even the police will not go. Pray for people to look beyond their bad circumstances and experience the kingdom of God in the midst of their difficulties.

For: (1) Basketball Team Camp for Boys, Central Hills, 24 - 26th (MM); (2) The last Sunday of March a new church met for the first time in the city of Riobamba, Ecuador. A group of young believers rented a former restaurant and are holding services there. Pray that God will be glorified as they grow in faith and number.

Missionaries Steven and Cindy Jobert and their three children, recently returned to Ciudad del Este, Paraguay. Ask God to supply all their needs as they re-establish their home, since they sold all of their belongings earlier. Pray that God will use them to be a catalyst in the church at Kilometer 7 to motivate those believers to begin new works.

For: (1) Mississippi Baptist Chaplains' Association Spring Retreat, Camp Garaywa, 19th - 20th (Evan); (2) Evangelical Adult Conference, Central Hills Baptist Retreat, 19th - 21st (D&FM); (3) Please pray for Prime Minister Ferenc Gyuresany of Hungary (Eastern Europe, between Austria and Romania).

Randy L. Rennett, director of missions for the Kern County Association, Bakersfield, Calif., is launching a new evangelism ministry this summer enlisting teams (two students each) to do direct evangelism for 10 weeks. Pray for a great evangelistic harvest through the 10 participating churches.

Baptist representative Jenny Burns writes: "L., a 25-year-old student in Wales, has been separated from her husband for five months. She has never heard about Jesus and His love for her. She asked me if we could help her and her estranged husband to learn how to be married. They are meeting with us twice a month and for a basic marriage course."

For: (1) Memorial Day; (2) Special Needs Camp, Central Hills, 29th - June 2nd (MM); (3) Chad Cravens is the church planting strategist for Delaware and the eastern shore of Maryland. Pray for God to call men and women as church planters, teachers, or core members of a new church.

The Uruguay Deaf Team asks: "Please pray for us on the front-line, as you would for those in a physical battle. The deaf have been left unreached for centuries, and Satan is not letting them go without a fight. The team, with our spiritual armor on, needs your prayer support. Ask the Lord to give strength, courage and His victory."

Pray for continual unity of mind and spirit for the Northwest Mexico City Team. Pray that as we continue to model a house church, we will integrate several Mexican believers and non-believers into our house church, Obra Nueva. Please pray that we will find other Mexican homes where God wants to plant a new house church.

Missionary Deborah Winans meets with Dr. F., a female internal specialist, once a week in Japan. Thank the Lord for the inroads into this lady's life. Pray that Dr. F. will hear the things that are shared, so that her eyes will be opened to Truth. Pray for the many lives that will be touched for Christ through Dr. F. after she becomes a Christian.

For: (1) Hispanic Evangelism Conference, Central Hills, 26th - 27th (CPD & Evan); (2) Tim Williams, Okotoks, Canada, is strategy coordinator for west Canada. Pray for 48 students to be equipped to "walk with God and hang out with non-believers" for six weeks.

For: (1) Camp Staff Orientation, Camp Garaywa, 27th - June 2nd (WMU); (2) One believing woman living among the Sunni of the Levant prayed with her husband R last month that she would experience God's guidance in her life, and God responded by leading R to a great job! Pray that believers will continue to be bold in their witness among these dear people.

## Discover the Joy of Missions Conference/Weekender

### Bus Trip A

September 26 - October 1, 2006

Includes program fee, conference meals, conference lodging (double occupancy), and transportation

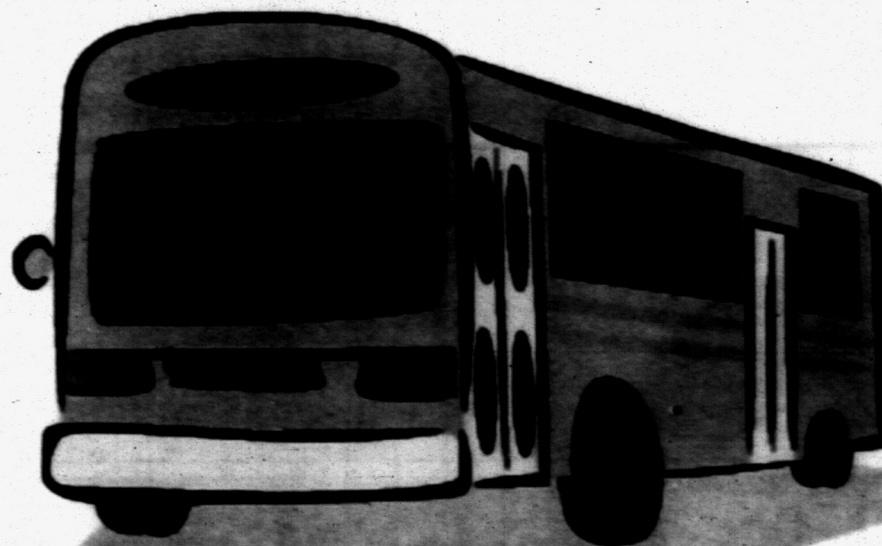
\$600

### Bus Trip B

September 28 - October 1, 2006

Includes program fee, conference meals, conference lodging (double occupancy), one night travel lodging (double occupancy), and transportation

\$450



Mississippi wMu is sponsoring two bus trips to the *Discover the Joy of Missions Conference and Missions Weekender* at LifeWay Ridgecrest Conference Center. "Bus Trip A" will be attending both the training conference and missions weekender. "Bus Trip B" will only attend the missions weekender. The cost and registration for each trip are listed. We will travel on 29 passenger buses provided by Cline Tours.

For more information contact the state wMu office: 1-800-748-1651 or check out our Web site: [www.mbc.org](http://www.mbc.org)

Deadline to register: July 28

# HOUSE TOPS





1. Bible Drillers, First Church, Boyle



2. Bible Drillers, Mt. Zion Church,



3. Groundbreaking, Mt. Zion Church, Independence



## MISSISSIPPI BAPTISTS

1. First Church, Boyle, recognizes its Bible drill winners: Katie Brooks, #1, Katrina Horne, #2, and Sarah Thomas, #3.

2. Mt. Zion Church, Columbus, recognizes its children's Bible drillers. Front row, from left: Kelcey Silvestri, Reagan Hern, and Logan Bedsole; back row, from left: Morgan Rose, Laura Stevens, Sarah Hern, Skylar Pearson, and Austin Oswalt.

3. Mt. Zion Church, Independence, held a groundbreaking ceremony for its new facility, which includes a 500-seat auditorium, fellowship hall, kitchen, and educational facilities.

4. First Church, Clinton, held a rocking chair party for nursing home residents from the metro area. Shown, seated, is church member Nell Williams from St. Catherine's Village, surrounded by WMU members Elizabeth Robertson, Edith Cassibry, Ruth Thomas, and Ashley McCaleb.

5. Hebron Church, Grenada, ordained Blake Newsom to the ministry May 7. Shown are Cecil Nation, Tommy Hipp, Gene Brewer, pastor Harold Simmons, Newsom, Granville Vaughan, and Bob Campbell.

6. First Church, Eupora, is hosting a gospel singing featuring Embrace June 25, 6 p.m. A love offering will be taken.

7. Holly Church, Alcorn, held a Women's Spring Tea where ladies gathered for food, song, devotion, and sharing stories of family teapots.

8. Paul Church, Tallahatchie County, is hosting a gospel singing May 20, 1 p.m. featuring Second Chance, Larry Livingston, the Kilgore Sisters, the Gospel Grands and local singers.

9. Cedar View Church, Olive Branch, is hosting a community singing May 20, 6 p.m., featuring The Call to Worship Quartet.



4. WMU, First Church, Clinton



5. Deacon Ordination, Hebron Church, Grenada



7. Women's Tea Party, Holly Church, Alcorn

## STATE CHANGES



West and family

Calvary Church, Prichard, has called Ron L. West as pastor. West comes with his wife Paula and children Catherine and Jeff.



South 28th Ave. Church, Hattiesburg, has called Gregory Burks as pastor. Burks, a Pearl River County native, holds degrees from the University of Southern Mississippi, Liberty University, and Louisiana Baptist Theological Seminary. He previously served Peace Grove Church, Lacombe, La.

## OBITUARY

Allen Glenn Perry, 86, died May 4 at his home in Philadelphia. The funeral was at First Church, Philadelphia, May 7 with burial in Cedarlawn Cemetery, Philadelphia. Dan Howard and Eugene H. Dobbs officiated.

Perry was a member of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board for 17 years, with 14 years of service on the Executive Committee, including a term as chairman. He also served the Convention as chairman of the executive director search committee, the budget committee, and the Gulfshore Assembly committee; as technical advisor to the building committee; and a member of the organization, constitution and bylaws, and long-range planning committee. He was elected President of the Mississippi Baptist Convention for two terms, 1971 and 1972.

He is survived by his wife of 58 years, Doris Beery Perry; two sons, John Michael Perry, New Hope, Penn., and Thomas Glenn Perry (wife, Denise), Fort Worth, Tex.; three daughters, Barbara McLaurin (husband, P.C. "Mac") of Starkville; Janet Tichnell (husband, Del) of Petal; and Sylvia Gasa (husband, George), of Pensacola, Fla.; six grandchildren, three sisters-in-law, and a host of nieces and nephews.

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JUNE 19-23

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for complete details. Register today!!!

Brian Hill Baptist Church  
Summer Music Camp '06  
Any questions call...





1. MC Sports Hall of Fame Inductees

1. The Mississippi College "M" Club inducted seven new members into its Sports Hall of Fame on April 22. Inducted were (pictured from the left): Terry Fleming ('90), Mobile, Ala.; David "Hap" Hudson ('83), New Port Richey, Fla.; Elbert "Mo" Lyles ('82), Natchez; Joe Boyles ('78), Brandon; Michael Rice ('77), Mobile, Ala.; Dutch Nichols ('61), Hollywood Beach, Fla.; and John Williams ('57), Jackson.

2. The Joe Roberts Forensics Society at William Carey College will host the second annual High School Forensics Camp July 17 through 21 from 9 a.m. until

5 p.m. on the Hattiesburg campus. Forensics is the study of speech and debate and includes oral interpretation, debate, platform speaking and limited preparation speaking. The cost of the camp is \$275 for day campers and \$375 for overnight campers. The day camper price includes lunch. The overnight camper price includes breakfast, lunch and dinner. Overnight campers will stay in dormitories on campus. The registration deadline is June 1. For more information call Daniel Schabot at (601) 318-6775 or (800) 962-5991 ext. 775 or email at daniel.schabot@wmc Carey.edu.

**Antioch Church, Monticello: Homecoming, May 28; Sunday School, 10 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m.; followed by noon meal and singing with Chosen; Walt Grayson, speaker.**

**Bellevue Church, Pontotoc: Homecoming, May 21; worship, 11 a.m.; dinner and fellowship, noon; singing, 1 p.m.; Brett Williams, speaker; Tommy Innon, pastor.**

**Calvary Church, Carroll County: Homecoming, May 28; mini concert with Jimmy Hood, 10:30 a.m., followed by worship, dinner, and singing, 1 p.m.; Mark Nail, speaker; Bud Vance, pastor.**

**Concord Church, Franklin: Homecoming, May 28; worship, 11 a.m., followed by dinner on the ground; afternoon service, 1:15 p.m.; James Case, speaker.**

**Derma Church, Derma: Centennial, May 28; Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.; worship, 10:45 a.m., followed by covered dish lunch and afternoon service; Glen Putman, Jim Bain, Everette Martin, and Chris Aldridge, speakers; Linda Ward, The Bollingers, The Bratton Family, Ace Cannonb and DBC Quartet, music.**

**Faith Church, Hickory Flat: Revival, May 18-21; Thurs.-Sat., 7 p.m.; Sun., 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; fellowship supper, Sat., 6 p.m.; Johnny Rakestraw, speaker; Andy Roe, music; Larry West, pastor.**

**Ingomar Church, New Albany: 100th Anniversary, June 2-4; picnic, with singing, testimonies, special music, Fri., 6 p.m.; fellowship, finger foods, testimonies, music, Sat., 6 p.m.; worship, speakers, banner processional, recognition service, Sun., 9:30 a.m.**

**Fellowship Church, Starkville: Revival, May 19-21; Fri.-Sat., 7 p.m.; Sun., 10:30 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Junior Davis, speaker; Byron Green and The Cleary Quartet, music.**

**Liberty Church, Carroll County: Homecoming, June 4, 10:45 a.m., followed by lunch; John Gray, Grenada, speaker.**

**New Zion Church, Crystal Springs: Homecoming, May 21; worship, 11 a.m., followed by covered dish luncheon; Leroy Brewer, speaker; First Love, music; Norris Curry, pastor.**

**Oak View Church (formerly Temple Church), Terry: Anniversary, June 4: worship, 10:30 a.m., followed by dinner on the grounds; Ken Brown, pastor.**

**Pine Forest Church, Collinsville: Homecoming, May 28; Sunday School, 10 a.m., worship, 11 a.m., followed by lunch and afternoon singing with Second Mile, 1 p.m.; O. Lyn Nations, pastor.**

**Providence Church, Carrollton: Revival, May 28-31; 7 p.m. nightly; Gary Jackson, speaker; Steve and Becky Carver, music.**

**Southside Church, Hattiesburg: 25th Anniversary and reunion, Jul. 22, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Rawls Springs Community Center.**

**Wayside Church, Scobey: Homecoming, May 21; worship, 11 a.m., followed by meal and fellowship; William Smith, III, speaker; David Briscoe, music; Jim Nunnelee, pastor.**

**West Shady Grove Church, Wayne County: Homecoming, June 4, 11 a.m., followed by lunch; Mitchell Smith, pastor and speaker.**

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"Normal" people divorce over money fights.  
"Normal" people are broke.

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## FAMILY BIBLE STUDY

### Lydia: Willing Service

Acts 16:11-15, 40; Philippians 1:3-11

By Huey Dedmon

Have you ever been guilty of doing trivial or unimportant things rather than the things that are really important? Often we find ourselves lost in a world of busy-ness, doing things that seem important at the time but in the scope of things are really unimportant. Somehow the more important things go undone and we discover that our life and ministry is in an unbelievable mess. This week's lesson focuses on the life of a woman named Lydia. Very little is written in scripture about her, but what we have drives home a very important lesson for us.

The 80/20 rule dominates most of our church service life. Church leaders agree that 80% of

the work accomplished in most churches is accomplished by 20% of the churches members.

This may vary a little from church to church, but in my experience I have found this to be very accurate. Why is it that so many church members are so content to sit and let someone else do all the work? How can I do my part in serving God in my church? The story of Lydia will help us to see how we all should be actively serving in our church.

Paul and Silas had begun their missionary journeys and had arrived in the Roman province of Philippi. (HCSB, Acts 16:11-12) They began to search for a place to pray and found themselves outside the city gate talking with a group of



Dedmon

women. Without hesitation Paul began to share the story of Jesus with these ladies. Lydia was a part of the group and opened her heart listened to what Paul was sharing. (v. 14) Later, she and her whole house were baptized as believers. She opened her house and asked

Paul and Silas to come and stay with her. Her response of service is a shining example to us. Our immediate reaction to our salvation should be an open and willing heart of service. If we are truly devoted to God for what He has done for us, that devotion should transform us into a willing servant. There is no waiting period to begin to serve the Lord, and service can come in many ways. We can open our homes as Lydia did. We can serve as a Sunday school teacher, deacon, nursery worker, host a visiting pastor, give money to sponsor a mission team, etc ... The list is endless. Lydia became

a follower of Christ and immediately began to support and encourage Paul and his missionary team. (v. 15) If you are not sure where or what God is leading you to do, get involved with someone who is already serving. Very soon God will reveal to you your special place of service. Later on in chapter 16 we find Paul and Silas just getting out of jail by the miraculous movement of God's Spirit. Where did they go? They went to Lydia's house. Her service to the Lord had opened up a door for her to host in her home the new church at Philippi. Paul and Silas saw and encouraged the believers there and then left the city. (v. 40)

The book of Acts shows us that Lydia was one of the first converts in the city of Philippi. It would be reasonable for us to assume that as we move to Paul's letter to the church at Philippi, that Lydia's house was still the place where the church met for worship. Even if the church was meeting somewhere else, we can be assured that

Lydia was among the believers in Philippi. You can see now why Paul addressed the believers the way he did in Philippians, chapter 1. He addresses them as partners in the gospel. (v. 5) In that partnership Paul admonishes them to determine what really matters. (v. 10) The question arises, what does really matter? Through a prayer for the believers at Philippi, Paul prayed for them to increase in love, knowledge, and discernment. Paul lets us in on very important principle for living the Christian life. These are three things we must practice in our lives to keep us doing "what really matters." What really matters is for us to be pure and blameless. The most common deterrent for someone coming to know Christ is the fact that we do not live pure and blameless lives. In fact more often than not we live our lives as hypocrites. We too often talk the talk but we fail to walk the walk.

Dedmon is minister of education at First Church, Grenada.

## EXPLORE THE BIBLE

### Get Real

Isaiah 58:3-14; Micah 6:8

By Lori Clendinning

"Get real, man!" This slang phrase can be heard throughout American culture, but the truth behind it can be applied to lives everywhere.

Just how "real" is our faith? Does it stand out among all the false religions in today's world? Many religions place an emphasis on ritual that demonstrates itself in ethical and compassionate behavior, yet downplays or eliminates any kind of internal change.

Even many Christians find it easy to go through recognized motions of religion without allowing faith in God to impact their daily lifestyles. God, however, wants His people to demonstrate their devotion to Him by meeting human needs.

Throughout history God has used prophets to wake up His children from spiritual apathy.

Isaiah wrote that going through the motions of religion in an attempt to manipulate God is unacceptable to Him: "Yet on the day of your fasting, you do as you please." (58:3) This action is a form of self-focused religion, disingenuous and rejected by God.

The 58th chapter of Isaiah brings to light this type of false religion. Isaiah pointed out the difference between false and real fasting. A form of self-humiliation, fasting involved abstention from food and drink, with an intention to reinforce prayers offered during times of crisis or distress. Mosaic law directed God's children to fast on the Day of Atonement, but four additional days of fasting were added during the exile. They were to commemorate Jerusalem's fall to the Babylonians and the subsequent national



Clendinning

disasters that God's people suffered. Perhaps Isaiah's prophecy was delivered during or following one of the country's fasts. Some Bible scholars point out that Isaiah's prophecy makes no mention of the temple or sacrifices, which may mean that the words were delivered sometime between the return from Babylon and the rebuilding of the temple. This would place the prophecy between 538 and 520 BC.

Isaiah's words did not indicate a call for an elimination of the religious ritual, but that one should direct the fasting toward helping others less fortunate: "loose the chains of injustice ... set the oppressed free ... share your food with the hungry ... provide the poor wanderer with shelter ... clothe the naked." (55:6-7) Through Isaiah, God announced that by unselfishly meeting the needs of people who are less fortunate, His people could demonstrate genuine devotion to Him. This is referred to as "other-focused service" and it is genuine,

receiving God's blessing.

The beginning point of other-focused service is having a real relationship and maintaining intimate fellowship with God. When worship is focused on God it is genuine and pleasing to Him. When God receives true worship, it spills out to others. This is also the focus of Micah 6:8: "He has showed you, O man, what is good ... To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."

Micah was another of God's prophets, beginning his ministry about 735 BC. Israel and Judah were enjoying unusual prosperity and peace, but were not without internal troubles. As people became affluent, they also began to take on the practices of the pagans. Their rich appetite for possessions and luxuries began to affect the economy as laborers struggled to keep up with the demands.

Farm workers, frustrated with barely making ends meet, migrated to the large cities, but the overcrowding and lack of employment led to squalor, disease, and poverty. Worship of God was abandoned as the nation became spiritually sick.

Baal and his female counterpart Anath became the main focus of religious rituals which included depraved acts of celebrating prostitution, drunkenness, violent assaults, incest, and homosexuality. These became sanctioned activities within religious services performed by Canaanite priests on the grounds of their temple shrines.

As a supporter of the Sinai covenant, Micah prophesied that severe punishment would be brought upon God's children if they continued to reject His laws. He pleaded with the Israelites to repent and return to God before it became too late for forgiveness.

And what of today? The late Christian songwriter Keith Green gave a wake-up call in his 1978 song, "To Obey is Better Than Sacrifice" when he penned these words as if God was speaking to His children: "To obey is better than sacrifice. I don't need your money, I want your life. And I hear you say that I'm coming back soon, but you act like I'll never return."

Time to get real, Church.

Clendinning is a member of First Church, Brandon.

## Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital printouts

are not reproducible. Digital photos may be used if submitted as a JPEG file via either (a) e-mail, (b) three-and-a-half inch floppy disk, or (c) CD. Photos must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted.

All news items are subject to editing,

and all photographs are subject to cropping. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. Requests to return photographs must be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Submit news and photographs to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.

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# Bibliocipher

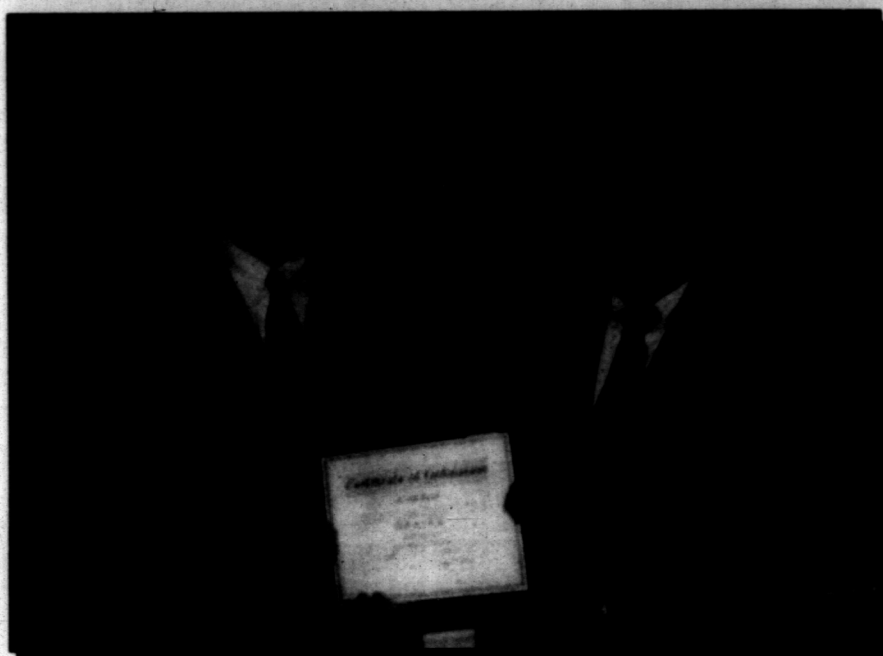
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HPB NR JS THN, SKHS,  
TKJEZ SKZQ TZDZ SKZDZ,  
SKZ BHQN TZDZ HFFR-  
LVEJNKZB SKHS NKZ NKR-  
WEB AZ BZEJYZDZB.

EWXZ STR NJO

Clue: H = A

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Luke Two: Nine.



1. Rutland and Hancock, Lakeshore Church, Jackson



2. McAfee and Walters, Lakeshore Church, Jackson

1. Danny Rutland (left) interim pastor Lakeshore Church, Jackson, congratulates Jimmy Hancock (right) on becoming a deacon. Rutland presented Hancock with a certificate of ordination.

members for many years of dedicated service during their homecoming services. From left: Sam Hughes, Louise Seabrook, Dorothy Parker, Judy Valentine, Gala Boner, Anna Pippen, Linda Windham, and William Parker.

2. Lillian Walters presented Ashley McAfee with a certificate and trophy for successfully completing her third year of competition with the Bible drill team of Lakeshore Church, Jackson.

5. Friendship Church, Ecu, recently honored Harold Anthony for 35 years of service as deacon. Shown are Gene York, Anthony, and pastor Buster Wilson.

3. Williamsville Church, Kosciusko, recognizes the children who performed in Hallelujah! He Did It!, the children's Easter musical.

3. Children's Easter Musical, Williamsville Church, Kosciusko

4. Plainway Church, Laurel, recognized several of its

6. Cherry Creek Church, Pontotoc, recently honored minister of music Harold Reeder, who is retiring after 45 years of leadership. He was honored with a luncheon and plaque. Shown are pastor Rex Ard and Reeder.

7. Pine Forest Church, Collinsville, recognizes its youth Bible drillers. Shown are the participants.

8. Cross Roads Church, Pelahatchie, recently ordained minister of children and students, Aaron Reynolds, to the ministry. Shown are pastor John Vaughn, Reynolds, and Steve Parten.



8. Reynolds Ordained, Cross Roads Church, Pelahatchie



4. Recognition for Dedicated Service to Plainway Church, Laurel



7. Youth Bible Drillers, Pine Forest Church, Collinsville



6. Reeder Honored, Cherry Creek Church, Pontotoc



5. Anthony honored, Friendship Church, Ecu